

*Davie Dott*  
*London - 1750 4.*

A

## FUNERAL SERMON

Preached at

UXBRIDGE, June 24, 1750.

[Price Sixpence.]



X

*The Blessedness of TRUE CHRISTIANS  
in a Future State.*

4

A

## FUNERAL SERMON

Preached at

UXBRIDGE, June 24, 1750.

On Occasion of the

DEATH of a Pious Young Person.

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By BENJAMIN MILLS.

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Published at the Desire of surviving Relations.

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## R E V E L. xiv. 13.

*And I heard a Voice from Heaven,  
saying unto me, Write, Blessed are  
the Dead which die in the Lord  
from henceforth: Yea, saith the  
Spirit, that they may rest from  
their Labours, and their Works  
do follow them.*

**I**N the Beginning of the xiith Chapter, St. John had a Vision of a Beast rising up out of the Sea, having seven Heads and ten Horns, and upon his Horns ten Crowns, and upon his Heads the Name of Blasphemy. To this Beast the Dragon, spoken of before Chap. xiith, and by whom is very plainly meant the Devil, gave his Power, and his Seat, and great Authority. Ver. 2d. I think it has been made at least exceedingly probable, that by this Beast is meant the Pope, the Head of the present Hierarchy of the Romish Church \*. This

\* Lowman in loc.

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Beast is further described as making it his great Endeavour to promote the Interest of the Dragon, from whom he had received his Power ; as setting himself *against God and his People, blaspheming God's Name and his Tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven*; as *making War with the Saints, and overcoming them*, and having a very large and extensive Power, so that he was worshipped by all that dwelt upon the Earth, except those whose Names were written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World. Verses 7, 8, 9.

IN the 11th Verse of that Chapter, the Apostle had a Vision of another Beast coming up out of the Earth, exercising the Power of the first Beast, and causing those that dwelt on the Earth to worship him ; doing great Wonders, and deceiving those that dwell on the Earth by the Miracles he had Power to do : causing an Image of the first Beast to be made, and giving Life to it, and obliging Men to worship it ; and causing all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a Mark in their right Hand, or in their Foreheads ; and suffering none to buy or sell, who had not the Mark of the Beast, or his Name, or the Number of his Name. By this Second Beast, a very judicious Ex-  
positor

positor \* understands the *Clergy* of the Church of *Rome*, many of whom, especially in the *Germanick Empire*, enjoy great temporal Estates, Jurisdictions, and Royalties, as annexed to their Churches by the Favour of Kings and Emperors; and who, being all subordinate to the *Pope*, promote his Power and Authority as much as possibly they can.

IN the Beginning of this Chapter of my Text, the Scene of the Prophetick Vision is transferred from Earth to Heaven; and the Church, which was before represented as persecuted by the Beast, is now represented as in the Presence of the *Lamb*, delivered from all its Imperfections, Sorrows, and Sufferings, and arrived at a State of perfect Purity and Felicity in Heaven. *A Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's Name written in their Foreheads.* Ver. 1st. These are such as kept themselves pure from Idolatry and Superstition, and held out constant in their Regards to God and his Truth, in Spite of all Persecutions. *And they sung a new Song before the Throne,* which was such as none could sing but themselves. Ver. 3d.

\* Lowman in loc.

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THIS Vision of the happy State of faithful Christians is followed by another. Ver. 6. *Another Angel flies through the Air, publishing the Gospel to all People, exhorting them to fear God, and give Glory to Him, because the Hour of His Judgment would surely come, in which he would take exemplary Vengeance upon Idolaters, and those who opposed His pure Worship.* That this is meant by *the Hour of God's Judgment* seems evident from the Words of the second Angel, Ver. 8th. *And there followed another Angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great City; because she made all Nations drink of the Wine of the Wrath of her Fornication.*

In the next Verses, a *third Angel* denounces terrible Wrath against all those who, in order to escape the Persecutions the Beast would raise, should forsake the Truth, and fall in with the prevailing Corruptions of the Times. They who turned their Backs upon *Christ*, in order to keep fair with the World, and to avoid suffering for Religion, should have their Portion with the Beast whom they worshipped, in the bitter Effects of *God's Wrath and Indignation.*

**HERE**

*HERE is the Patience of the Saints ; here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus.* Ver. 12th. q. d. In this the Fidelity of true Christians shall be tried and manifested ; this will discover and distinguish those real and upright Servants of God, who continue stedfast in their Regards to his Will, and to the pure Institutions of Jesus, against all false Doctrines and corrupt Worship, however enforced by the Powers, the Encouragements, or Terrors, of this World.—Then follow the Words of my Text,

*AND I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* The Words are thus paraphrased by a very good Annotator \*, “ As a further Encouragement to Faithfulness and Constancy, “ I was directed by a particular Voice from “ Heaven, to declare the unspeakable “ Blessedness of all those that shall be “ faithful. As they die in the Faith, they “ die in the Favour of God, and of the

\* Lowman in loc.

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"*Lord Jesus Christ.* The Spirit of Revelation assures them not only of an End to all their Afflictions in a short Time, but that their Patience and Faithfulness in the Hour of Trial shall be rewarded gloriously in a State of perfect and unmixed Happiness."

I HAVE read these Words, at the Choice of surviving Relations, as the Ground of my Discourse on this solemn Occasion. The Encouragement contained in this Passage of Scripture was, I doubt not, a great Support to the Faith and Patience of the *Deceased* amidst the Trials of a lingering Decay and great Conflicts of Nature: and the Blessedness assured therein, we have abundant Reason to think, she was intitled to, according to the gracious Constitution of the Gospel Covenant. There is the most satisfactory Ground to believe, that She died *in the Lord*, i. e. in a State of Union with Him, and in His Favour; and therefore that She *refts from Her Labours, and Her Works shall follow Her*, or, as the Words might be rendered, *go along with Her*, in the Reward of everlasting Joy and Happiness.

THE Method I shall observe in discoursing on these Words shall be,

FIRST.

**FIRST.** To shew you, that the present Life is ordinarily a State of Labour and Trouble to true Christians in a more especial Manner.

**SECONDLY.** I shall consider a little the Happiness of their State after Death, which is represented in the Text by their resting from their *Labours*, and their *Works following*, or accompanying, them.

**THIRDLY.** I shall offer some Arguments to prove the future Happiness of those who die in the Lord.

**LASTLY.** I shall cloſe all with a brief Application.

**FIRST** then, I am to shew you, that the present Life is ordinarily a State of *Labour* and Trouble to true Christians in a more especial Manner. Now this will soon appear, if we consider, that they have their Share with other Men of the common *Labours* and Sorrows to which human Nature is liable in this its fallen State; and more than this, have some *Labours* and Conflicts to undergo, which others are unacquainted with.

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with. I need not spend Time to shew, that good Men have their Part of the common Infelicities and Troubles of this imperfect mortal State. As they descend from one common Root with the rest of Mankind, so they are involved in the common Fate of human Nature, consider'd as lapsed, afflict-ed and mortal. *Man in general, without any Distinction of Good and Bad, is bor'n to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards* \*. It would be almost as unnatural and surprising for a Man in the present State of human Nature to be without *Labour* and *Trouble*, as for a Spark of Fire, left to its own nat-  
ural Tendency, not to ascend. The *best* of Men have the same frail and mortal Consti-  
tution with the *worst*. Bodily Infirmiti-  
es and Diseases attend them as well as others. They are equally liable to Pains, Losses, Disappointments and Death with other Men. So that the moral Good or Evil of a Man's Temper and State is not to be known by any Thing that befals him in this World. *All Things, as Solomon has observed †, come alike to all; and there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked; to him that serveth God, and to him that serveth him not. As is the Good, so is the Sinner; and he that*

\* Job v. 7. Chap. xiv. 1. † Eccles. ix. 1, 2. ○

*fearereth as he that feareth an Oath.* Unless the Sentence denounced against fallen Man were reversed, or the present State of Things were changed, or a miraculous Power did continually interpose, it cannot be but that Trouble and *Labour* should be the ordinary Lot of Mankind both good and bad.

BUT if good and bad Men stand on the same Foot with respect to the natural and necessary Evils of this mortal State, yet there are *Labours* and Troubles which the true Christian experiences and undergoes in a more peculiar Manner. He has Work to do, and Troubles to bear, which other Men are little acquainted with. He toils and labours to *crucify the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts* \*. He conflicts with Pride and Passion, and other irregular Affections, which too often break forth, and create him great Uneasiness, and bitter Sorrow. Tho' the prevailing Disposition and ordinary Bent of his Heart is towards God and Holiness, and though his Actions habitually tend that Way; yet Temptations sometimes prove too successful, and he is ensnared by the Allurements of Sin, or surprised through Unguardedness and Inadvertancy. This fills his

\* Gal. v. 24.

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Mind with Sorrow and Shame upon a Reflection; makes him utter his Grief and penitent Confession before God; and puts him upon the more assiduous Labour and closer Watchfulness to subdue the Inclinations of the Flesh, and guard against the Deceitfulness of Sin, and the Snares of the World and the Devil. He finds it Employment and Labour enough to preserve a steady Influence and Power of Religion in his Heart, and to maintain an uniform conscientious Practice of it in his Life.

AND how often is the Trouble and *Labour* of a Christian's Life increased by dark and melancholy Thoughts, disheartening Fears, and perplexing Doubts, with regard to the State of his Soul, and the Concerns of another World? How apt are some truly upright and conscientious Persons to condemn themselves wrongfully through the Prevalency of Fear, and the Weakness of their Faith? To count themselves Hypocrites, or mere Pretenders to Religion, and to apply to themselves the Terrors and Threatenings which belong to such? They are afraid to touch the Comforts and Promises of the Word of God, apprehending they have no Right in them, and dreading to defile them with their unhallowed Hands.

They

They are ready to think that *God has cast them off*, and spoken *bitter Things against them*; that they have no Interest in the Favour of the Almighty, as having been but mocking *God* and deceiving *Men* in all their Pretences to Religion. And though these dark Imaginations are groundless, though this heavy Charge against themselves is altogether unreasonable, yet it gives them the most piercing Affliction, and fills their Souls with unspeakable Sorrows and Anguish.

AGAIN. The true Christian oftentimes undergoes Sorrow and Trouble in this Life upon the Account of *other Men* as well as *himself*. The Sins of others greatly affect and grieve his Soul. The Dishonour which is done to God, and the Injury done to the Souls of Men by their ungodly and vicious Practices, wound and afflict his Heart. He mourns over the Sins of those who have not the Grace to mourn for themselves. The Increase and Audaciousness of Vice, the prevailing abounding Corruption and Immorality of the World, is a Subject he cannot think of without Sorrow and Pity. Thus we find it was with the Heart of the pious *Psalmist*. *Horror hath taken Hold on me because of the Wicked which*

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keep not thy Law. And again, *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes because they keep not thy Law.* And once more, *I beheld the Transgressors and was grieved because they kept not thy Word* \*. 'Tis even a Burden to the Soul of a true Christian, to have his Ears filled with impious Oaths and horrid Imprecations, which accost him in almost every place: to behold rational Creatures, who were made in the Image of God, and designed for Virtue and Happiness, transforming themselves into Beasts, and even Monsters of Wickedness. *His righteous Soul, like that of Lot, is vexed with the filthy and ungodly Conversation of the wicked* †. He is ready to complain with the Psalmist. *Wo is me that I sojourn in Meseck, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar* ‡. And even to wish with the Prophet Jeremiah. *Oh! that I had in the Wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring Men, that I might leave my People and go from them* ||. But with what a peculiar Anxiety and Anguish is the Soul of the good Man wounded, when he beholds his nearest and dearest Relations, for whose Welfare he has the most tender Concern, going astray in the Paths of Vice, walk-

\* Psalm cxix. 53, 136, 158.  
7, 8,      † Psal. cxx. 5.      || Jer. ix. 2.

ing

ing in the Counsel of the Ungodly, and perhaps fitting in the Seat of the Scornful; making a mock of Sin, and hardning their Necks against repeated Admonitions and Reproofs, and all possible Attempts to reclaim them. And that this is no rare and uncommon Case, the Experience of every Age has sufficiently testified. The Sorrows and Tears of distressed broken hearted Parents, over dissolute and incorrigible Children, many Instances of which are to be observed in almost every Place, are a most affecting Proof and Evidence of this Truth.

IT might be added further, that true Christians have sometimes found this World to be in a more special Manner a State of Labour and Trouble to them, as they have been forced to undergo grievous Sufferings and severe Persecution on the Score of Religion; and even to lay down their Lives to keep a good Conscience and maintain their Integrity. This was the Case of great Multitudes of the primitive Christians under the Persecutions of *Heathen Rome*. And the same has been since that Time the Lot of many faithful and courageous Servants of Christ, through the Rage and Tyranny of a *Popish* Spirit. It has been the Case of not a few of our Forefathers in these Lands,

to

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to seal the Truth of their Religion with their Blood. And it is to be ascribed to the merciful Interposition of God's overruling Providence, that this Spirit of Persecution is now restrained; and that the World is not so grievous and troublesome a Place to any among us, upon this Account, as it has been to many others. But I must not enlarge any further on this Head, but proceed to the

SECOND Point proposed, *viz.* To consider the happy State of true Christians after Death. This is represented in the Text, by their *resting from their Labours, and their Works following them, or going along with them.*

THIS Description of their Happiness leads us to consider it in a *Negative* and a *Positive* View.

FIRST. We may consider the *Negative* Part of the Happiness of real Christians after Death; and that is, their Exemption from the Evils and Sorrows of the present State. *They rest from their Labours.* They are got quite out of the Reach of all the Calamities and Sufferings with which they were exercised in this our World. Like  
Mariners

Mariners who have been long driven about by tempestuous Winds, made the Sport of the Waves, and often in Danger of splitting on Rocks: but are at length arrived at the desired Haven, where all their Dangers and Fears are over. They are got to that quiet and peaceful Place, where *the Wicked cease from troubling, and where the Weary are at Rest*: Where *the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor*. *The Small and Great are all one there; and the Servant is free from his Master*\*. This Rest may be considered with regard to the Body, and to the Soul.

I. DEATH gives the Body Rest from all the Toils and Infirmities of the present Life. The Body being mortal by the Decree of Heaven, and as the Effect of the Apostacy, it cannot be but that, in its present State, it should be obnoxious to those Diseases and Pains which are the necessary Concomitants and Attendants of Mortality. And very often it is harassed and fatigued with Variety of Pains and Miseries, violent in their Degree, and frequent in their Returns and Periods. The greatest Part of the short Space of Life is, by some Persons, spent in racking Pains or wasting Diseases; and wea-

\* Job iii. 17, 18, 19.

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*risome Days and Nights may most justly be said to be appointed them §.* But they can accompany the good Man no farther than the Grave. There he shall drop all the InfirmitieS, Diseases, and Decays which attended the Body in this present State; and like one who has obtained Ease after a tedious Fit of tormenting Pain, shall take his Rest till the Morning of the Resurrection. The Body, which has now been quite tired with the Toils and Fatigues of this troublesome Life, shall there enjoy the most sweet and profound Sleep, till it awake refreshed, vigorous and incorruptible at *the Voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God* \*. Death, we find, is frequently represented in Scripture under this Metaphor of a *Sleep*; and the *Grave* is spoken of as a *Bed*, in which the Body takes its Rest. *He shall enter into Peace, they shall rest in their Beds* †. *Lighten mine Eyes, lest I sleep the Sleep of Death* †. *The Multitude of them that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake* ||. And when *Lazarus* was dead, *Jesus* tells his Disciples, *Our Friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go to awake him out of his Sleep* \*\*. And *Christ* is said to be become the first *Fruits of them that*

§ Job vii. 3.      \* 1 Thess. iv. 16.      † Isai. lvii.  
2.      † Psal. xiii. 3.      || Dan. xii. 2.      \*\* John  
xi. 11.

*Sleep.*

*Sleep*\*. And true Christians are said to *sleep in Jesus*, and to be *fallen asleep in Christ*†.

2. THE Souls of those *who die in the Lord*, have *rest from all the Sorrows and Labours* they underwent in the present Life. All the Christian's Trials and Exercises, all his Fears and Temptations, are now at an End. He is now no longer struggling with inbred Corruptions, or conflicting with spiritual Enemies. He complains no more of the Indisposition or Weakness of the Flesh, the Backwardness and Reluctance, or the Deadness and Distraction of his Heart. He no longer laments the Influence of corrupt Principles within him. He has no further Need of Watchfulness and Mortification. He is now got out of the Reach of all the insnaring beguiling Objects of this present World ; they can no more discompose or defile his Soul. The Darts of Satan's Temptations can now wound or annoy him no more. In this Life he was oftentimes ready to fear whether he should hold out and persevere in his religious Course ; whether he should finish the spiritual Warfare with Success : But now he is arrived at the Goal, and become a Conqueror, yea *more than a*

\* 1 Cor. xv. 20.      † 1 Thess. iv. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 18.

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*Conqueror through Christ Jesus his Lord ‡.* He has now dropt the Body of Sin and Death, with all the Evils and Imperfections which attended it ; and is set free from every Inconvenience and Difficulty the Soul underwent by its Union with corrupt and mortal Flesh. There is now no more Appearance of any irregular Desire, of any tumultuous, disorderly Passion ; but the Soul is all pure, refined, serene, and peaceful. It is possessed of Purity without Spot or Blemish, and therefore meet for uninterrupted Peace, Tranquillity, and Happiness. There is the most exact Harmony and Regularity in all its Faculties, and nothing from *itself*, or from *without*, that can give it the least Molestation or Disquietude. In a Word, many Duties incumbent on us in this Life, which are the necessary Result of our present imperfect Condition, and which increase not a little the Toil and Labour of a true Christian, such as *Repentance* and *Confession of Sin*, *Watchfulness*, *Self-denial*, *Resignation to the Will of God*, and *Patience under severest Afflictions*, shall then be entirely at an End, because there will be no further Reason for them ; nor shall the Soul of the good Man be any farther vexed, as in this Life, with the corrupt Practices and Conversation

‡ Rom. viii. 37.

of the Wicked, being in that State absolutely separated from all Intercourse and Commerce with impure and vicious Spirits. This is plainly enough suggested by our Lord in the Parable of the *rich Man and the Beggar*\*. But I go on,

SECONDLY, to consider the *positive Part* of the Happiness of those *who die in the Lord*. *Their Works do follow them, or go along with them.* Now this may be understood in a double Respect.

I. *THE Works* of those *who die in the Lord* may be said to *follow, or accompany, them* into the other World, as they still retain the Remembrance, or Consciousness, of them, and derive no inconsiderable Pleasure and Satisfaction from thence. Every rational and conscious Being is happy in himself, in Proportion to the Degree of his Virtue or moral Goodness. Thus *God*, who is infinitely good, is also infinitely happy, and must necessarily be so, because he is unalterably good and holy. And the *Creature*, according to the Improvement he has made in *Virtue*, will be happy in his own Mind, and from the Reflections of his Con-

\* Luke xvi. 26.

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science, in another World. Conscience, we know, can make a Man miserable or happy *in this Life*, more than any external Occurrences, adverse or prosperous, can possibly do. This is evident from hence, that many an upright and virtuous Man has felt and declared himself happy in the midst of manifold temporal Evils; in Poverty and Disgrace, in Ignominy and Death. The Answer of a good Conscience has made the greatest Evils light and tolerable. Thus the *Apostle* could say, *None of these Things*, he means the Sufferings he underwent for the Sake of *Christ*, and in his Service, can move me, so I may finish my Course with Joy\*. And on the other hand, the Sense of Guilt, and the Torment of Conscience, will take away the Relish of the most prosperous Condition, and render a Man miserable amidst the greatest Abundance of temporal Possessions. Now it will be one Part of the Happiness of those who die in the Lord, to have always the peaceful and pleasant Reflection on their own Integrity and Virtue. The Satisfaction which results from their Consciences will be a perpetual Feast, an everlasting Fountain of Serenity and Pleasure to their Souls. It is in the Nature of

\* *Acts xx. 24.*

the Case impossible, supposing the Consciousness of their Virtue and Uprightness always to continue with them, that they should ever want Pleasure and Satisfaction, or ever feel the least Uneasiness or Misery from themselves. Such is the Nature of the Soul that it will make itself either happy or miserable as long as it exists by its own Thoughts. And as virtuous Actions yield agreeable and cheerful Thoughts, so the virtuous Man must from himself, or from the Make of his own Soul, be an happy Man. What a Pleasure must it be to the upright and pious Soul in its future State to reflect upon its religious Temper and Conduct in the present Life, and during its Residence in the Body? How greatly must the Vigilance, and Toil, and Labour it underwent to mortify irregular Desires, to restrain inordinate Appetites, to improve and cultivate every virtuous Disposition, and to *abound in all the Fruits of Righteousness*\*; how greatly, I say, must such Reflections delight and gladden the holy Soul throughout the Ages of Eternity? What an unspeakable Pleasure must it enjoy when it finds itself conformed to the Pattern of the divine Purity without the least Irregularity

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or Disorder, without the least moral Imperfection or Deviation? But,

2. THE Works of those who die in the Lord may be said to follow them, as they shall receive from God an abundant Recompence of all their Labours and Services, of all their Trials and Afflictions, in the present Life. They will find, by the most happy Experience, that their heavenly Master does not expect to be served for nought, and that their Labour in the Lord is not in vain \*. Heaven will yield them an ample and eternal Reward of all their Works of Faith, all their Labours of Love, and all their Trials and Exercises of Patience. As their Souls will be perfectly conformed to God in Purity and Regularity, so they shall enjoy exquisite and inconceivable Pleasures in the Society of God and their Redeemer, of the glorious Angels, and Spirits of the Just made perfect †. They shall be satisfied when they awake with the divine Likeness ‡, and have the intimate Contemplation, and unrestrained Enjoyment, of that most glorious and perfect Being, that immense all-sufficient Good, that inexhaustible Foun-

\* 1 Cor. xv. 58. . . † Heb. xii. 23. . . ‡ Psal. xvii. 15.

tain of Happiness, *in whose Presence is Fullness of Joy, and at whose Right-hand are Pleasures for ever more* \*. It will be the everlasting Employment, and the everlasting Felicity, of the Saints, to contemplate the divine Nature and Perfections, and to search into the Mysteries of God's Providence, and of his Grace. Their Inquiries will not then be fruitless and unsatisfactory, as very often they are in the present World; but they shall then see as they are seen, and *know even as also they are known*. In this World they saw but *as in a Riddle*, darkly and imperfectly; *then they shall see Face to Face*. Now they *know but in Part*; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in Part shall be done away †. In a Word, every Faculty of the Soul shall have the most agreeable and ravishing Entertainment; and the blessed Inhabitants of that happy Place shall most willingly and delightfully assist each other's Contemplations and Praises, and promote each other's Joy and Happiness.

AND not the Soul only of the true Christian shall enjoy the Happiness of the heavenly State, but the Body also, being raised out

\* Psal. xvi. 11.      † 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

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of its dusty Bed by the Power of God, and reanimated by its Partner, shall be received into the blissful Regions, and partake of the Felicity of that glorious Place. *Them which sleep in Jesus*, says the Apostle, *will God bring with him* \*. That which is now *sown a natural Body* shall be *raised a spiritual Body*. That which is *sown in Weakness* shall be *raised in Power*. That which is *sown in Dishonour* shall be *raised in Glory*. That which is *sown in Corruption* shall be *raised in Incorruption* †. The Body shall then be intirely refined from all its Dross; it shall have put off all its corruptible and mortal Qualities, and become a sprightly, vigorous, immortal Companion for the Soul, to which it shall be re-united, and with which it shall join in the Exercises and in the Enjoyments of Heaven to all Eternity. Though now it be vile, and weak, and dishonourable, yet then it shall appear bright and noble, and be invested with a visible Glory as a Token of its Honour and Advancement. Christ *shall transform the Body of our Humiliation*, says St. Paul, *that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body* ‡. It seems probable to

\* I Thess. iv. 14.

† : Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

‡ Phil. iii. 21.

me,

me, from that last-cited Text taken in Conjunction with some other Passages of Scripture, that our first Parents, in their State of Innocency, had a luminous Glory with which their Bodies were invested as with a Robe; in Token of the Honour and Dominion of the State in which they were then placed, being constituted Rulers of this lower World. This Glory, we may suppose, they lost when they committed the first Act of Disobedience against God. And this to me appears likely to be the Meaning of that Expression, *the Eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked* \*. They perceived that the glorious Covering which they had had before was taken from them; and this aggravated their Shame and Confusion for their Transgression. To this Glory also, I apprehend, that Passage of the *Psalmist* does, at least in Part, refer: *Thou madest Man a little lower than the Angels; thou crownedst him with Glory and Honour* †. And this Glory, which was lost by the Offence of the *first Adam*, in which respect our present Bodies are called the *Bodies of our Humiliation*, or in which we are humbled, brought low, or made vile, will be restored to the Bodies of the Saints.

\* Gen. iii. 7.

† Psal. viii. 5.

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in Heaven by the Grace of the second Adam. Accordingly it is said, that *our Bodies shall then be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body.* And the Glory of Christ's Body in Heaven may, in some measure, be apprehended from the Glory with which he was surrounded at his Transfiguration on the Mount; when *the Fashion of his Countenance was altered*, as St. Luke expresseth it; when *his Face did shine as the Sun*, as St. Matthew has it; when *his Raiment was white as the Light*, or white and glistering, as it is in *Luke*; and when *Moses and Elias appeared in Glory*, and talked with him; when *a Cloud of Glory covered them*, and a Voice out of the Cloud proclaimed Him *God's beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased*\*. How great will be the Difference, upon this Supposition, between the frail, imperfect, vile, and mortal Body as it now is, and the exalted, glorious, incorruptible, and immortal Bodies the Saints shall put on, when they are clothed with their *House which is from Heaven*†? What a splendid radiant Appearance will there be in the Regions of the Blessed, when the *Bodies of the Saints shall shine forth like so*

\* Matt. xvii. 1, &c. Luke ix. 28, &c. † 2 Cor. v. 2.

many Suns in the Kingdom of their Father \* ? And how vast and inexpressible must be the Honour and the Felicity of those who die in the Lord, when their Bodies shall be invested with this Ensign of Dignity and Royalty, and their Souls be perfectly conformed to the Image of God in Purity or moral Rectitude, and incessantly delight themselves in the Contemplation, the Praises, and the Enjoyment of the greatest and the best of Beings ? But I proceed to the

THIRD GENERAL HEAD proposed, viz. To offer some Arguments to prove the future Happiness of those who die in the Lord. There are several Considerations which might be largely insisted on ; but I must content myself with mentioning a few, and that briefly.

1. I MIGHT argue from the Temper and Disposition of their Souls that they must necessarily be happy as long as they continue to exist. An holy Soul has a Fund of Delight and Tranquillity in itself; and 'tis impossible in the Nature of the Case that it should be miserable while it has the

\* Matt. xiii. 43.

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clear and full Exercise of its Powers and Faculties, and is disengaged from the Clogs and Fetters of this frail and mortal State. But this I have had Occasion to take Notice of in a former Part of this Discourse.

2. THAT the State of Good Men after Death shall be happy I may argue from the Nature and Perfections of God. Reason suggests to us, and the Scripture Revelation confirms it, *that God is a Rewarder of them who diligently seek Him* \*. As God is a Being of infinite Purity, and has an infinite Love and Esteem for Virtue, it being an Imitation of his own most amiable Pattern, He must necessarily take Delight and Complacency in the Virtuous Man. *The righteous Lord loveth Righteousness*, says the Psalmist, *His Countenance doth behold the upright* †. And as God is infinitely good and powerful, he is both able and willing to honour those who imitate him, and to reward those who serve him faithfully. Now as the Soul of a good Man is in its own Frame and Temper meet for, and capable of, the Presence and Enjoyment of God, we may very reasonably argue from the Perfections of the divine

\* Heb. xi. 6.

† Psal. xi. 7.

Nature,

Nature, that Souls thus dispos'd shall be admitted to the Presence and Fruition of the divine Majesty, and receive all the Pleasure and Felicity from Communion with Him, and the Enjoyment of Him, which their Faculties are qualified for. As there is supposed to be no Defect or Incapacity in the human Soul, when purified from Sin and Sensuality, to bar or obstruct its Enjoyment of God, so it seems unsuitable to the Perfections of the divine Being to suppose that God would deny or exclude it from such Enjoyment.

3. This Truth is abundantly confirmed by the Revelation of God's Word. St. John had in the Text the Testimony of a Voice from Heaven, and the Witness of the Spirit, in Order to strengthen the Evidence, and confirm our Persuasion of the future Happiness of those who die in the Lord; Unless by the Spirit he means the Spirit of Prophecy as revealing this Point to the Prophets of the Old Testament \*. I heard a Voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, &c. The Testimony of God is the greatest and the surest Confirmation of the Truth of any thing. And he has given us throughout the holy Scripture ample and frequent Assurances of the Happiness

\* Isaiah lvii. 1, 2.

of good Men, both in Body and Soul, in his glorious and everlasting Kingdom. The Passages of this Sort are so many, and so well known, that I need not make Quotations. I will add,

4. THIS very Consideration that they *die in the Lord* is an Assurance and Security of their future Happiness. Our Lord Jesus died to procure the Blessedness of Heaven for all the Faithful. And He is *gone before to prepare the Mansions of Glory for them ; and will come again, and receive them to himself, that where he is there they may be also* \*. They make up the *Flock* of which he is the affectionate and faithful *Shepherd*. And he himself assures us that *He laid down his Life for his Sheep to save them from Ruin and Misery* ; that *He will give unto them eternal Life* ; that *they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His Hands* †. They stand in an intimate Relation to Him as *Members of his Body* ; and as the *Head* is glorified, so shall also the *Members* be. Their *Bodies* are a *Trust committed to his Care and Custody* when they drop into the *Grave* ; and *He will keep that which is committed to*

\* John xiv. 2, 3.

† John x. 11, 28.

Him

*Him until the last Day \*.* In a word, the true Christian, when he resigns this feeble Life, may intrust both his *Soul* and *Body* in *His Hands* with the greatest Confidence and Security, *as unto a merciful and a faithful Creator* †. He is *the Resurrection and the Life*; *whosoever believeth in Him tho'* *be were dead yet shall be live*; *and whoso* *liveth and believeth in Him shall not die for-* *ever*; *but shall be raised up from the dead* *in the last Day*, and *inherit the Kingdom* *prepared for the Saints from the Foundation* *of the World* ‡.

THE Application I shall make of this Subject will be only in two Particulars.

FIRST. If those who die in the Lord shall be for ever blessed, let us make it our Care so to live as that we may die thus, and be thus blessed after Death. We must not expect to die in the Lord, or to receive the Reward and Blessedness of such, if we are not careful to live unto the Lord; I mean, if we do not make his Glory our general Scope and grand Aim in Life, and his Work and Service our faithful Employment. We

\* 2 Tim. i. 12.    † 1 Pet. iv. 19.    ‡ John xi. 25, 26. Matt. xxv. 34.

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must now cultivate a Temper like that of *Christ*, and yield faithful Observance to all his Injunctions and Precepts, if we would at last die in him, and be owned for his when He shall come to judge the *World in Righteousness* \*. If we persist in the Love and Practice of any Sin, or wilfully disregard and neglect any Part of our Duty, we are already peremptorily assured that we shall not die in his Favour, but the *Wrath of God abideth on us* †. It will be altogether insignificant and useless to plead, *We have eaten and drank in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets*, if we have nothing more substantial than this to alledge for Acceptance ‡: for the Judge of the World has plainly told us, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven* ||.

SECONDLY. The Consideration of the Joy and Happiness of the Righteous after Death should be improved to alleviate our Sorrow for those who are dead in Christ §. Nature indeed will show its Reluctance

\* Acts xvii. 31.      † John iii. 36.      ‡ Luke xiii. 26.      || Matt. vii. 21.      § 1 Thess. iv. 16.

against

against parting with dear Relations, and intimate and valuable Friends. But Reason and Religion must be called in to our Assistance, to moderate natural Passions, and to prevent their Excess, especially when we have no Reason to *sorrow as those who are without Hope* \*. And this is an Argument of Support and Consolation which I may with great Justice and Propriety inculcate on the *mournful Relatives* of the *Deceased*, viz. that She is *lost* but for a *little while*, not *for ever*: That She is but got a little before You to the End of Her Labours and Sorrows, and arrived at the Haven of Rest and Peace: That She has only dropt the mortal Part, with all the Pains and Disorders that arose from thence, to resume it again, refined by the Grave, and raised healthful, incorruptible and immortal. Death has but given Her a final Release from all those Burdens and Distresses which Your Affection in vain attempted to relieve; and translated Her to those peaceful Regions of holy Souls, to which You *also* hope to arrive, and from whence, *surely*, You would not wish Her Return.

A NATURAL Sweetness and Benignity  
of Temper, improved by Principles of

\* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

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Virtue and Religion rooted early in Her Mind, and cultivated with continual Care, rendered Her Character truly amiable.

SHE made Conscience of the Exercises of Piety, both *publick* and *secret*; and took Delight in conversing with God and Her own Heart, finding the manifold Advantage of such a Course. And it was Her Care *to have a Conscience void of Offence towards Men*, as well as *towards God*\*. Her Behaviour in the several Relations in which She stood was such as could not fail to secure the Esteem and Affection of all that were about Her.

THOUGH Providence saw fit to exercise Her in the Morning of Life with the Trial of a very infirm Constitution, and frequent Returns of bodily Disorder and Pain; tho' She did for some Years drag on, as I may say, a dying Life amidst many Pressures and Conflicts of Nature; yet She bore Her Afflictions with a remarkable Submission and Patience, and learned Obedience by the Things which She suffered †. She was never known to express the least Dissatisfaction with the Disposals of Providence how grie-

\* Acts xxiv. 16.

† Heb. v. 8.

vous foever ; but on the other Hand, ready to look on the Afflictions She suffered as kind and merciful Allotments of Her heavenly Father, intended to take off Her Heart from present Objects by making Her sensible of the Emptiness of all terrestrial Things ; to strengthen Faith, and Patience, and other good Dispositions, and render Her more meet for the perfect Blessedness of the heavenly World. This was the Use She made of all her Trials ; and this Advantage She obtained by them, that She became less fond of *this World* ; that the Thoughts of Death were more familiar and less formidable to Her ; Her Desires after a better State more warm and ardent, and Her Hope of it more sure and reviving. This appeared in the serene and chearful Manner in which She talked of *dying* a little before Her Departure ; and in the Earnestness with which She cautioned those about Her, the *younger Ones* particularly, against the Snares of the World ; and exhorted them to make Religion their chief Care, that they might feel the Comfort of it in Life and at Death, and hereafter reap the Eternal Reward of it.

OH ! that the serious Advices She inculcated may make an indelible Impression on those

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those to whom they were given ; and that all of us, and especially the Young, may be excited by the Example of Her Piety, and encouraged by the happy Fruit of it in the Serenity and Cheerfulness of Her Death, to make Religion the Business of Life ; that they also dying in the Lord may rest from their Labours, and their Works may follow them in an ample and glorious Reward.



**F I N I S.**